

## Message Text

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R 100657Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY MASERU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4602

INFO AMEMBASSY GAVORONE

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL CAPETOWN

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MASERU 35

CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, LT, SF

SUBJECT: LESOTHO MINER UNREST

REF: MASERU 15

1. LESOTHO GOVERNMENT HAS STILL NOT EFFECTIVELY COME TO GRIPS WITH EASING CONCERNS OF ITS MINERS OVER DEFERRED PAY ISSUE. APPROXIMATELY 500 LESOTHO MINERS HAD RETURNED HOME AS OF JANUARY 8, LEAVING THOUSANDS OF OTHER BEHIND ON STRIKE OR AT LEAST VERY CONFUSED. CONSEQUENCES FOR LESOTHO OF RETURN OF CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF UNSCHEDULED MINERS SERIOUS BECAUSE OF INCOME LOSS AND POTENTIAL FOR UNREST. GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO HAVE TO DEAL WITH APPARENT WARNING FROM SOUTH AFRICA MINES THAT LESOTHO WILL HAVE TO PUT ITS AFFAIRS IN ORDER OR THE RECRUITMENT OF MINERS FROM LESOTHO WILL HAVE TO CEASE UNTIL IT DOES.

2. DESPITE THESE DIFFICULTIES, ODDS FAVOR GOL MAKING ITS DEFERRED PAY REGULATIONS STICK. REPORTED REMARKS BY RETURNING  
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MINERS INDICATE THEY EXTREMELY CONFUSED AND UNINFORMED ABOUT

NEW DEFERRED PAY PLAN. SOME MINERS BELIEVED GOL WOULD GET 50 PERCENT OF THEIR PAY FOR KEEPS AND NONE HAD BEEN TOLD THAT THEY WOULD RECEIVE INTEREST ON MINIMUM OF 60 PERCENT DEFERRED PAY TO BE HELD IN LESOTHO BANK UNTIL END OF MINE LABOR CONTRACT.

3. AS FOR MINE FIGHTS THAT HAVE ACCOMPANIED THIS CONFUSION, AT LEAST ONE ATTRIBUTED TO CONCERN OF XHOSAS WHO SAW BASOTHO GROUPING TO HEAR EXPLANATION ON DEFERRED PAY. XHOSAS THOUGHT BASOTHO WERE ORGANIZING TO ATTACK THEM AND STRUCK FIRST. ONE RETURNING MINER INTERVIEWED LOCALLY WAS UTTERLY CONFUSED, SAYING HE RETURNED HOME BECAUSE HE HEARD SHANGAANS WERE GOING TO TAKE OVER LESOTHO AND HE DIDN'T WANT THIS TO HAPPEN.

4. LESOTHO GOVERNMENT HAS NOT TOO EFFECTIVELY MOVED TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM CAUSED BY ITS GROSS NEGLIGENCE IN NOT INFORMING MINERS OF DEFERRED PAY PLAN IN ADVANCE. CHIEF JONATHAN HAS TOLD MINERS HE DISAPPOINTED IN THEM, CABINET HAS REAFFIRMED SOUNDNESS OF DEFERRED PAY PLAN, AND COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER HAS BLANDLY ASSURED MINERS THAT ONLY THEIR BEST INTERESTS BEING TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

5. GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE ABLE TO PERSERVERE IN ITS DEFERRED PAY POLICY AND MINERS WILL PROBABLY EVENTUALLY, BUT RELUCTANTLY, ACCEPT IT.

GOL HAS, HOWEVER, IMPLEMENTED POLICY IN WORST POSSIBLE WAY, AT EXPENSE NOT ONLY OF ITSELF BUT OF ITS CITIZENS WORKING IN SOUTH AFRICAN MINES. THESE INCIDENTS VERY LIKELY COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED IF GOL HAD AND UTILIZED EFFECTIVE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATIONS WITH ITS OWN PEOPLE.  
HAUGHT

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